

country. I know that large Churches and crowded Congregations net like a tonic. The atmosphere of intelligence and alertness is bracing; but I am not sure that town parishes provide the best ground for the growth of strong, spiritual character. The rush is too great for quiet reflection. The personal relation between pastor and people is frequently vague; and after all, it is personal influence that most deeply and most enduringly tells. Our Blessed Lord for the most part drew away from multitudes. He called and made and taught His disciples individually.

I would say to my brethren who are called upon to minister to small Congregations: "Do not despise the day of small things." Do not think lightly of the range of your opportunities. The ambition to do some great thing came near to being the ruin of Naaman and the continuance of his leprosy. Train yourselves to see the value of each individual soul—a value so vast that Christ would have died for it, even if there had been no other besides. Prove yourself the friend of every member of the family, his rock of refuge in difficulties, his counselor in perplexities, the unfailing sympathizer in his sorrows, and rejoicer in his joys; and then even a small country Parish will grow big with possibilities and pleasant with delight. The least duty grows great when it is discharged unto God.

I know one of the many trials and dangers of country Parishes is their monotony; the monotony to the Clergyman of the same handful of people, and the monotony to the people of the same, never changing Clergyman. Might not this monotony be wisely diversified by more frequent interchanges of Sunday duty with neighboring brothers? I am persuaded that more frequent interchanges would be beneficial both for Clergy and people. They would deepen the sense of brotherhood among the Clergy. They would keep them from settling down into ruts. They would pour freshness into their ministrations and stir up a greater interest in their message. I am sure they are worth trying and I warmly commend the suggestion to your consideration.